



**St Albans
District**



Chief Executive Officer

Appointment Brief
September 2026

Nick Shanks

Director, Harris Hill Ltd

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HarrisHill
Executive Search

Welcome from Alec

Thank you for your interest in our quest to recruit a new CEO. This has been initiated following the notice of planned retirement of our current long-standing CEO at the end of March 2027.

I have been a trustee since 2020 and Chair of the Trustee Board since 2022. In that time I have been impressed with the professionalism and dedication of CASTAD in understanding and addressing our client's needs. Although St Albans District is seen a relatively affluent area, this brings particular issues such as the high cost of housing. We also have many issues that are common across the wider network. We actively analyse our client data and use this to campaign on key issues including through our MPs and even the Prime Minister. We are financially secure and have a stable high-quality staff and volunteer base. We have detailed business plans and are always looking at how we improve the way we work. We work closely with other Herts Citizens Advice offices to access joint funding and provide support and backup to each other. We receive very positive feedback from national Citizens Advice on our level of service, business plans and overall delivery.

We have a positive and constructive relationship between the trustees and the CEO. Together we remain focused on delivering high-quality service that addresses the challenges within our local community.

Primarily, we are looking for a new CEO to protect the best of what we have and help us define and deliver plans to help us incrementally improve. This is within the community context within which we operate, bringing key stakeholders with us.

I hope this is of interest to you and very much hope you will consider applying.

Alec Campbell
Chair of the Board of Trustees



Who we are and what we do

Citizens Advice St Albans District (CASTAD) provides free, confidential, impartial and independent advice to help people overcome their problems. We campaign on the issues that matter to them when their voices need to be heard.

We are an independent local charity and part of the Citizens Advice (CitA) network across England and Wales. We have a team of 83 volunteers and 24 staff.

Our vision

We want to see a world where no one suffers through ignorance of their rights and responsibilities, or an inability to pursue them; and where the underlying causes of people's problems have been eliminated.

Our values

Effective	Accessible	Collaborative	Empowering	A learning organisation
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The advice we provide

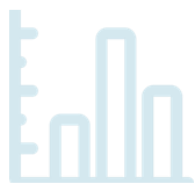
- **Generalist advice** on any subject including benefits, debt, housing, consumer issues, work, relationships, immigration
- **Specialist advice** on disability benefits, debt, homelessness, employment, energy advice and legal advice via our law clinic staffed by volunteer lawyers
- **Projects** to reach specific groups or issues, including people with disabilities, those at risk of homelessness or HK BN(O) playschemes

How we provide it

 Phone Local line 01727 811118 Hertfordshire Adviceline 0800 144 8848	 Email Visit our local website <u>citizensadvice stalbans.org.uk</u>	 Webchat Visit our national website <u>citizensadvice. org.uk</u>	 Face to Face At our St Albans office and outreach services in Harpenden, Redbourn and Wheathampstead
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Our impact in 2025/26

Who we helped



50%

of the clients we help are working-age between 30 to 54



17%

of all issues that clients have relate to housing in some way



8,992 people

helped over the phone, in person, and via webchat and email



20,057 issues

employment, benefits, housing, debt and family were the top issues

The difference this makes



£2,447,522

in income gains for our clients



£343,595

debt written off for our clients



£1,115,362

is the estimated value of the time given to help clients by our volunteers



49%

of clients report having a disability or face a long-term health condition



19%

of our service is delivered face-to-face to ensure our service is accessible to all



£4.80

generated in fiscal benefit (savings to government, public services) for every £1

Real people*, real lives, real outcomes

* names changed to protect identity

MoneyAdvice

Ben, a young homeless man, approached us for support in dealing with an apparent debt of £1,750 to HMRC. He had been placed in a hotel temporarily by the council along with his elder brother, for whom he is full time carer, with limited support from other family members. He was unable to negotiate with HMRC himself about the debt, which had arisen following a short period of self-employed work aged 16. With our support he completed the necessary tax returns and spoke to HMRC, with the result that the debt was removed from his tax record.

Zara was struggling for money each month. She had cleared most of her debts, but had built up a credit card balance of £1,600. Her old debts included gas and electricity. Her gas account showed two payments each month, only one of which was required, the other was adding to a credit balance on her account. This was for £70 per month so we stopped that standing order. She also had a credit balance of over £1,600 on her electricity account, we agreed a refund of £1,500 with her supplier. She used the money to get her glasses repaired and buy some food.



Disability Benefits

Luke, a 39-year-old man with autism and dyspraxia, works with support at a local super-market. He was on Disability Living Allowance for many years before

he had to move to PIP in 2019. He wasn't initially awarded PIP, and we helped him with a successful appeal in 2020 when he was awarded the Standard

Rates for Daily Living and Mobility - £103.10 per week. On review in June 2023, his PIP was stopped. We helped him again with another appeal. Started in November 2023, the result was not heard until April 2025. He was again awarded Standard Rate for both components. He got a £9,000 backdated payment.

He is now entitled to a Disability Premium in his Universal Credit and will get some UC to top up his earnings and backdated payments, thereby enabling him to live independently.

"I want [you] to know how you have pretty much saved my life prior to this I felt suicidal, constantly overwhelmed with no hope and that the financial stress of all this was never going to get any better I'm starting to finally feel free of the wreckage of my past."

Healthy Hub

Samaira was escaping domestic violence and moved to St Albans with no furniture, white goods or flooring for her new property. We signposted her to HertsHelp, Herts County Council for a needs assessment (as she has physical health issues resulting from assaults), and Emmaus. We also gave her information about St Albans community life including HA-WA, local churches, Knit and Natter groups, and Healthy Walks, so she felt less isolated moving to the district. We also helped her complete a PIP application and to get her Universal Credit updated to cover her rent.

Real people, real lives, real outcomes

* names changed to protect identity

Housing

Mohammad, in his 70s, contacted us when his landlord served notice to quit. We advised him of housing options available to older people locally, including housing association and alms house properties. He was also eligible to join the housing register. While looking for an alternative property, he was also advised to apply to the council as homeless for temporary accommodation. The council confirmed they would provide this in advance of the notice date. Alongside specialist housing advice, we also advised he was eligible for backdated Pension Credit (PC) and Housing Benefit, as well as a bus pass. He thought without a fixed abode he couldn't apply for a bus pass. He was especially pleased to be getting new glasses as a passported benefit from his PC award. The client was signposted to St Albans Old People's Trust, who assisted with moving and storage costs.

"[She] went out of her way to help me and without her help I would not be in the much better situation I am in now. She has helped to make my difficult future less stressful. Thank you."

Pension Credit Project (SAOPT)

Ivana had been struggling to manage her affairs since her husband died. She didn't read or write and her husband previously managed everything. She owned her property and her daughter lived with her but also does not read or write. Ivana came in because she had received a letter from SACDC and wanted to know what it said - it was confirming her Council Tax bill for 2026-27 at around £300 per month. Ivana said she couldn't afford this - an appointment was made for a benefits check and she provided a further letter from SACDC stating that Council Tax Support had been in her husband's name so she needed to reapply. We also identified eligibility for Pension Credit at £60.38 per week so we made her a further appointment to help complete the claims.



Law Clinic - Wills and Probate

We supported Linda, a mother seeking advice following the unexpected death of her ex-husband who suffered a rare heart condition. The most pressing issue was access to his medical records to assist the doctors in determining whether their son was also at risk of the same condition. The Hon-orary Legal Advisor (HLA) was able to explain that laws and protections of confidentiality continue post death, but that confidential medical records under certain circumstances may be accessed. Details of who to email within the NHS were provided. With regards to the estate, the grandparents (estranged from Linda) were acting as personal representatives for their son. The HLA was able to advise not only on the rules of Intestacy but also how to approach the issue sensitively given the unfortunate circumstances and broken family ties.

Our people

People are at the heart of our service. Of a total headcount of 107 delivering support and advice to local residents, volunteers account for 83 alongside a staff of 24, most of whom are part-time. From graduate interns to long-serving supervisors, the wealth of knowledge and experience acquired is extraordinary. This stems from a solid base of initial training, supplemented by ongoing updates, and many opportunities for personal development. Our people bring a diverse range of knowledge, outlooks and experiences with them, which benefit us all. Consequently, our people are our greatest asset and we recognise the importance of ensuring we provide a supportive workplace for everyone to feel part of.

One of our values is that we are a Learning Organisation, and this is embraced throughout the advice service as well as in the administrative functions. Our Office Manager attended an AI bootcamp delivered by the Media Trust; an excellent course generating a lot of thought. There is limited scope to deploy AI at the moment, but with two advisers also testing the CitA AdviceGuard tool we are conscious that this is most definitely on the horizon.

We secured capital funding to significantly upgrade our IT infrastructure, and much of the work was completed during 2025/26. New PCs and laptops have resulted in improved technical performance, enhanced security, improved operational efficiency and less troubleshooting required.

46,800

hours donated by our volunteers in 2025/26 to serve the local community

£1,115,362
is the estimated
value of time
given to clients
by our
volunteers

Our 3 Together Days held during the year are not just a great opportunity for everyone to socialise, but also form an important part of our continuing professional development and training and awareness programme. As well as presentations from some of our own team we also enjoyed hearing from external organisations, and topics discussed included:

- Parental conflict
- Fuel poverty
- Autism
- St Albans Good Neighbour Scheme
- Trading Standards
- UK Economy
- Cyber Prevent & Protect

11 new trainee volunteers
joined in January to form the Class of 2026 and begin assessor training



CASAD social at The Engineer Pub, Harpenden

“I’ve gained valuable knowledge about advice services, improved my problem-solving skills, and had the rewarding experience of making a difference in the community.”

Financials

Although we are part of the Citizens Advice network, we are an independent charity responsible for raising our own income and securing our financial stability. 2025/26 brought multiple challenges, needing to fund both ongoing services and a much-needed IT infrastructure upgrade. We are very appreciative of the generosity of grant funders and donors who made it possible. This was supported by the continued commitment of our staff and volunteers. We are pleased therefore to close the year financially stronger, with reserves improving by £58,918 to £262,563, of which £228,701 is unrestricted, and cash of £323,430. Our total income for 2025/26 was £597,000, an increase of £69,139 (13.1%) compared to last year.

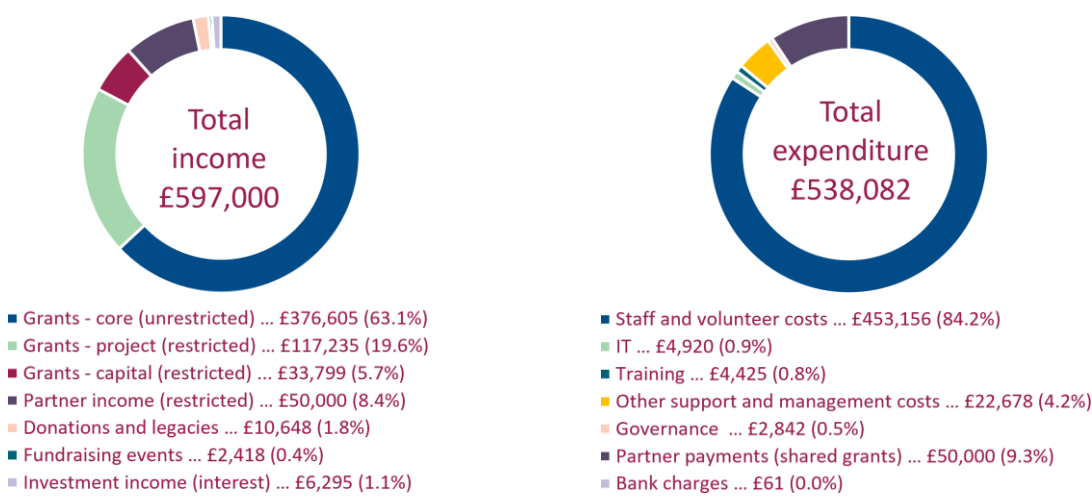
Most significant grant funders this year were St Albans City and District Council; Hertfordshire County Council; Hertfordshire Community Foundation, as a conduit for trusts and foundations; Citizens Advice nationally; National Lottery Community Fund; Access to Justice; St Albans Old People’s Trust and Trussell Trust. This, along with other funding, meant we were able to service the insatiable local demand for our services.

Restricted grants, which allow us to focus on specific client needs, amounted to £201,034. This allowed us to both provide clients with a more in-depth support beyond our core advice service but also commence a full IT upgrade. IT Capital funds totalling £76,493 were granted from four funders (The John Apthorp Charity; The Ennismore Charitable Trust; The Hobson Charity; The Harpenden Trust) of which £33,799 is included in 25/26, with the balance in 2026/27 as we complete the project.

In 2025/26 we spent a total of £538,082, a 3.8% increase on last year.

Salaries of £441,050, accounted for 82% of our total costs, an increase of 4.3% on last year, with a further £16,531 spent supporting staff and volunteers. Our staff and volunteers continue to be our most valued asset. The small paid team of 24 (12 FTE) enable many hours of volunteer time, valued at £1,115,362.

We are extremely grateful to all the organisations and individuals who support us.



Job description

Purpose of the Role

To provide strategic and executive leadership to CASTAD, ensuring high-quality, accessible and effective advice and support for people living and working in St Albans District, in accordance with the aims, principles, policies and requirements of Citizens Advice nationally.

Key Responsibilities

- Strategic leadership – work with trustees to develop and deliver strategy and business development plans; translate objectives into measurable priorities; monitor performance, risks and opportunities; and lead organisational change and continuous improvement.
- Service quality and impact – ensure accessible, effective, high-quality services that respond to local need, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups; maintain appropriate quality, case-recording and performance systems; and use evidence and feedback to improve services.
- People and volunteers – lead, motivate and develop staff and volunteers; ensure effective recruitment, induction, supervision, performance management, training, workforce planning and succession arrangements; and promote an inclusive, collaborative culture.
- Finance and sustainability – hold executive responsibility for financial performance; maintain effective controls, budgets, forecasting and reporting; manage financial risks; and work with the Treasurer and Board to support long-term sustainability.
- Income, fundraising and partnerships – develop and diversify income; identify funding and partnership opportunities; oversee significant bids; maintain strong funder and commissioner relationships; and demonstrate outcomes, impact and value for money.
- Governance, risk and compliance – provide timely, accurate information to trustees; support Board and AGM processes; implement Board decisions; manage organisational risks; and ensure compliance with legislation, regulation, contracts, Citizens Advice requirements, policies, safeguarding, health and safety, complaints and information security management.
- External relations and reputation – represent and advocate for the organization through research and campaigns; build effective relationships with local government, Councillors, MPs, funders, commissioners, Citizens Advice, community and voluntary-sector partners; contribute to strategic partnerships and networks; and protect the organisation's reputation, integrity and independence.
- Operations and development – ensure proportionate administration, effective technology and management information, appropriate premises and safe working arrangements; promote learning and improvement; and undertake other duties reasonably within the scope of the role.

Job description

Key Relationships

- Trustee Board, including Chair and Honorary Treasurer; staff, managers and volunteers; Citizens Advice regional and national networks; Hertfordshire Citizens Advice CEOs; St Albans City & District Council, commissioners and funders; Councillors and MPs; community, voluntary-sector, statutory and commercial partners; and clients/service users where appropriate.

Measures of Success

- Delivery of Board-approved strategy and business/development plans.
- High-quality, accessible services with demonstrable client outcomes, social impact and value for money.
- Strong financial management and a sustainable financial position, with diversified income and effective partnerships.
- Effective recruitment, retention, development and engagement of managers, staff and volunteers.
- Effective governance, risk management, compliance and organisational change.
- Excellence in national Citizens Advice assessments.
- Strong stakeholder relationships and a positive reputation, while protecting the organisation's integrity and independence.
- Effective research and campaigns.

Person specification

Essential experience and knowledge

- Senior leadership experience with responsibility for people, resources and service delivery.
- Developing and implementing strategy or business plans and translating objectives into delivery.
- Managing and developing staff and volunteers, including recruitment, training, performance and retention.
- Financial management experience, including budgets, financial monitoring and decision-making.
- Income generation, fundraising, commissioning or developing funding opportunities.
- Working effectively with a Trustee Board, Board or equivalent governance body.
- Leading organisational or service change.
- Understanding of local/national government, public services, commissioning, the voluntary/community sector and the advice-service environment.
- Understanding of working within a local organisation operating within the requirements of a national membership organisation.
- Building relationships with funders, commissioners, local government and senior stakeholders.
- Use of client evidence and local data to run research and policy campaigns to improve service delivery and client outcomes.

Essential skills and behaviours

- Strategic thinker able to translate strategy into practical action and measurable outcomes.
- Credible, inclusive leader able to motivate and develop staff and volunteers.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal and influencing skills, with the ability to build trust.
- Sound and timely decision-making, including communicating and implementing difficult decisions appropriately.
- Strong financial awareness and ability to interpret and communicate financial information.
- Able to prioritise, delegate and manage competing demands effectively.
- Collaborative approach to change, with resilience and adaptability in a changing environment.
- Commitment to the aims, principles, values and integrity of Citizens Advice and to accessible, high-quality advice services.

Desirable

- Experience with Citizens Advice.
- Chief Executive, Director or equivalent senior leadership experience in high performing charity or public-service organisation.
- Experience working with local authority commissioners and developing cross-sector strategic partnerships.
- Experience developing services in response to identified social need.

Terms of appointment

Job Title:	Chief Executive Officer
Salary:	Circa £50,000 - £55,000 p.a.
Contract:	Permanent, Full-time.
Pension:	6% employer pension contributions
Annual Leave:	28 days plus public holidays
Death in service:	Death in service cover at 3 times annual salary
Location:	Citizens Advice St Albans and District The Civic Centre, St Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3JE Flexible working will be considered
Pre-employment Checks:	In accordance with Citizens Advice national policy, we will require the successful candidate to be screened by the DBS



How to apply

If you would like to apply, please send the following:

- An up-to-date CV
- A Supporting Statement (no more than 1 x A4 pages) outlining why you are interested in becoming Chief Executive Officer of CASTAD demonstrating relevant experience for the role.

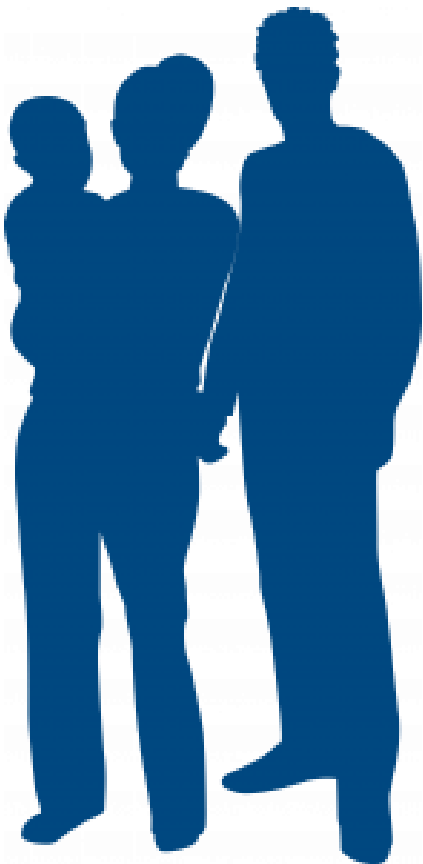
Please submit your completed application to: nick.shanks@harrishill.co.uk by **9am Monday 19 October 2026**

Dates for your diary:

Closing date for applications:	9am Monday 19 October 2026
First & second interviews	w/c 2 November 2026

Please could you also let us know if you will require any special provision should you be called forward for interview.

Please state in your application if you have any commitments during the interview period that may coincide with these dates.



Advertisement

Harris Hill is delighted to be working with Citizens Advice St Albans District (CASTAD) to recruit its new Chief Executive Officer.

CASTAD provides free, confidential, impartial and independent advice to help people overcome their problems. We campaign on the issues that matter to them when their voices need to be heard.

We want to see a world where no one suffers through ignorance of their rights and responsibilities, or an inability to pursue them; and where the underlying causes of people's problems have been eliminated.

As Chief Executive, you will:

- Deliver high-quality client services to approximately 9,000 users per annum.
- Ensure financial resources are in place to run the service.
- Work with the Trustee Board to define and lead the future strategy and sustainability of CASTAD.
- Execute the agreed strategy by ensuring a detailed and measurable Business Plan is in place, regularly tracked, and reported on.

If you are inspired and excited by what CASTAD does, we'd love to hear from you.

Job title: Chief Executive Officer

Salary: circa £50,000 - £55,000 p.a.

Contract: Permanent / Full-time

Location: Citizens Advice St Albans and District, The Civic Centre, St Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3JE. (Flexible working will be considered.)

How to apply:

Please review the Recruitment Pack for further information about CASTAD, the CEO position and for details on how to apply.

Closing date for applications: 9am Monday 19 October 2026

Both CASTAD and Harris Hill operate an equal opportunity policy and commit to treating all of our candidates and jobseekers fairly. We welcome and encourage applications from everyone regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships.